

Roughly 10 miles south of where Senator PADILLA and I toured Little Village, there is a trauma center, Advocate Christ Medical Center. It is one of the busiest in Chicago's South Side.

One of the doctors who recently completed his residency in that trauma center is Dr. Manuel Bernal Mejia. During this pandemic, Dr. Bernal has been saving lives every day in the emergency room. He cared for Chicagoans at all stages of life, from delivering babies to providing comfort to patients during their last moments. And he has cared for more COVID patients than he can count.

It is in our country that Dr. Bernal works every day to take care of our friends and loved ones; it is in our country that Dr. Bernal graduated from college and medical school; and it is in our country that Dr. Bernal has lived since he was 2 years old.

Despite that, Dr. Bernal, who is now an emergency room physician in nearby Rockford, has still been left behind by our broken immigration system. And there are thousands more just like him.

According to the definition established by former President Trump, there are more than 200,000 DACA recipients that have served as "essential critical infrastructure workers" during the pandemic. That includes more than 40,000 healthcare workers like Dr. Bernal. Some of them work in emergency rooms like him and others as nurses, paramedics, respiratory therapists.

So let's ask a basic question when it comes to immigration. Would America be better? Would Illinois be better? Would Chicago be better without Dr. Bernal? All of the Dreamers who are working every day to save American lives in our hospitals? I don't think so.

For Dreamers like Dr. Bernal, DACA has been a lifeline. It has given them a chance to give back to the only home they have ever known. But we all know DACA is not a permanent solution. The reality is, Dreamers have been standing on shaky ground for far too long.

These young people are the best. They defend us as members of our military, care for our parents and family members as home health aides, and they teach our children in school. But because Congress has failed to fix our broken immigration system, Dreamers with DACA can only plan their lives in 2-year increments. And every day, they live in fear that the rug is going to be pulled out from under them at any moment. It happened under President Trump. He tried to eliminate the program. It was finally saved at the highest Court in the land across the street, in the Supreme Court.

Dreamers and immigrants like them, who give everything they can to our country, deserve a path to legal status. The fact is, their future is our future.

As I mentioned, the budget reconciliation package the Senate is expected to vote on soon contains President Biden's Build Back Better Plan, a blue-

print for our Nation to mount an enduring economic recovery.

The proposals included in that plan would supercharge our economy by cutting taxes for working families; making childcare, healthcare, and transportation more affordable; providing a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants.

Let me say that another way. Immigration reform would drive our Nation's economic recovery for years to come. A pathway to legal status for Dreamers, TPS recipients, and essential workers could boost our Nation's GDP by \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years—\$1.5 trillion.

Additionally, a path to legalization could create 400,000 new jobs and increase every American's annual wage by an estimated \$600. How can that be? Putting these immigrants to work on the payroll, how could that help other people? Because we have a dynamic economy, and what we saw on 26th Street in Chicago can be replicated over and over again if these new immigrants are given a chance to work hard, as they all do, show their skills, and build the economy around them. Our Nation is leaving billions, if not trillions, of dollars on the table by failing to fix our broken immigration system.

Earlier this month, the White House published a report that found that providing a path to permanent legal status would "allow . . . currently unauthorized immigrants to pursue and accept jobs for which their skills are well-suited." Many of these immigrants are of prime working age, which means they could help grow our Nation's tax base for the foreseeable future. That is money that can go towards shoring up Social Security, Medicare, and funding our Nation's priorities. In fact, leading economists have argued that America needs immigrants to keep these programs solvent.

In the words of Mark Zandi, Moody's chief economist, the United States is "not going to be able to address our fiscal problems . . . if we don't change our policy with regard to immigration." He is not alone. Other economists agree. Douglas Holtz-Eakin, president of the right-leaning American Action Forum, has argued that, in the absence of immigration, America will "shrink in population . . . become older, and . . . become less important on the world stage."

With the Build Back Better plan, this Senate is finally taking up the important work investing in America's future. That means building railroads and transit networks that will connect communities and providing funding for high-quality childcare so every parent can have a safe place to leave their child during the workday. It also means providing immigrant families the stable footing they need to contribute to our future.

For these families, make no mistake, America is home. Every day, they help to make our communities better and

our economy stronger. That is the case we plan on making to the Senate Parliamentarian once again. This is the first opportunity we have had in a long, long time to begin building an immigration system that works for America. And for our own sake, I hope we can get it done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last night's vote was an exercise in futility, as Democrats knew would be the case.

For months now, Republicans have made it clear that we will not help Democrats raise our Nation's debt limit to finance Democrats' partisan tax-and-spending spree. If Democrats want to pass a massive, partisan tax-and-spending bill without Republican input, they can raise the debt limit without Republican input.

Democrats, of course, have complained they can't raise the debt limit by themselves. The truth is that they don't want to do it by themselves. Democrats want the credit for their social policies and the government handouts they are planning, but they don't want to own the pricetag.

Democrats are talking about engaging in a wild, reckless spending spree that will worsen our inflation problem, threaten economic growth, and substantially increase the government's control over Americans' lives. Republicans can't support that kind of legislation, and we are not going to help Democrats increase the credit card limit to pay for it. If the Democrats want to raise the debt limit, they have to do it by themselves.

I have come down to the floor more than once to talk about the reckless spending and the massive tax hikes the Democrats are planning. I could spend the rest of my time here on the floor today talking about the irresponsible amount of money Democrats want to spend and the tax hikes they are proposing, but today, I want to look at things a little differently.

Last week, House Speaker PELOSI had this to say in reference to the Democrats' \$3.5 trillion spending bill. She said:

It's not about a price tag. It's about values. It's not about a price tag. It's about values.

Mr. President, she is partially right because while the pricetag does matter, this is about more than just the pricetag. This is about values and visions—specifically, Republicans' and Democrats' different visions of government.

The Democrats' bill isn't just about spending money, even though it does spend money—a lot of it. It is about a

specific vision of government, one where the government is intimately involved in nearly every aspect of your life from, to quote the New York Times article on the Democrats' bill, "cradle to grave."

Someone once said to me that the difference between Democrats and Republicans is the Republicans believe in less government and more freedom; Democrats believe in less freedom and more government. I think that is a pretty accurate description of what we are seeing here.

Republicans oppose Democrats' tax-and-spending spree because it spends an irresponsible amount of money, but more than that—more than that—we oppose it because it moves us further and further away from the American idea of limiting government.

Our Founders established a limited government for a reason—because they respected individual liberty, and they knew that the heavier the hand of government, the less liberty Americans would enjoy. That is why our Constitution is as much about what government cannot do as what government can do.

Democrats might protest that they are not restricting individual liberty, that they are just providing a helping hand or redistributing wealth, but when you expand the reach of government, the diminishment of liberty is inevitable. When government gets involved in a new area of life, it rarely, if ever, just comes with the benefits; it comes in with rules and regulations and mandates.

Take Democrats' childcare benefit. Democrats are preparing to offer childcare subsidies to parents around the country, but it is not as simple as just taking some money from the government and going out and purchasing childcare because it turns out the Democrats are changing decades-old childcare funding programs to favor secular childcare providers who provide care at daycare centers. If you prefer to choose a faith-based provider for your child, you may be out of luck.

A 2020 Bipartisan Policy Center survey found that among parents who used center-based childcare, 53 percent used a faith-based center—53 percent. They reported that they chose these providers for a variety of reasons, from the quality of the caregivers, to the cleanliness of the facility, to the values of the provider. That number may change when Democrats' tax-and-spending plan goes into effect, not because parents are changing their childcare preferences but simply because Democrats have set up their benefit to favor secular center-based childcare providers.

With government benefits come government control and government picking the winners and the losers. Secular childcare providers win under Democrats' massive government expansion; faith-based providers and parental choice, not so much. Electric vehicle manufacturers win; the natural gas and

biofuels industries, not so much, despite the fact that both have been key to producing cleaner American energy. Unions win under this bill; Americans making charitable donations, not so much. Democrats are allowing the charitable deduction to expire but adding a new tax break to pay for union dues. When government is in charge, government dictates your choices and picks winners and losers.

Government also gets a lot more involved with overseeing the details of your personal life. Democrats are planning to add a provision that would force banks and credit unions to report the details of your financial activity to the IRS, including certain deposits, withdrawals, and other transactions. Democrats are apparently still discussing the amount that would trigger the new reporting requirement, which has been proposed at \$600 or \$10,000, but whichever number they settle on, a lot of ordinary Americans are going to end up having their bank or credit union forced to report their private information to the IRS. Talk about Big Brother.

Probably the biggest reason that Republicans believe in limited government is because we believe in individual liberty, and we know that the more government expands into your life, the more your choices and liberties are curtailed. But there are other reasons that we believe in limited government.

One big reason is that we know that the Federal Government simply isn't the best way of delivering many services. There are some things that the Federal Government is well-suited to do—handling our national defense, for example. If our country is invaded or attacked, it is a lot more effective for our national military to respond rather than for each State to respond on its own. But there are a lot of other things that are better handled at the State level or at a local level or in some cases not by government at all.

Our State government in South Dakota is a lot more familiar with the needs of South Dakotans than the bureaucrats at Washington Agencies. The city government in Sioux Falls or Rapid City or Pierre or Box Elder is even more familiar with or more able to respond to the needs of individual residents. That is why a lot of things are better handled at the State or local level or, as I said, at times not by government at all.

Big Government is impersonal and inflexible. It is not familiar with and can't take into account particular and sometimes opposing needs of each State or each community. Big Government is one-size-fits-all.

Big Government is also inefficient. Anyone who thinks the Federal Government would do a good job running Americans' healthcare hasn't dealt with a Federal Agency very recently.

Big Government is unaccountable. Think about it. If you have a company that offers a bad product, what is going

to happen? People are not going to buy your product, and you are probably going to go out of business quickly. It doesn't work that way with the Federal Government. The Federal Government is not going to go out of business because it isn't doing a good job delivering the services that are promised.

If the government is in charge of your healthcare and it isn't delivering quality healthcare, you have little recourse. Sure, you can try to vote in new Members of Congress to reform things, but even then, change can take a very long time. Real reform of an existing government program is rare. Elimination of a bad government program? Even rarer. As Ronald Reagan used to say, the nearest thing to eternal life that we will ever see on this Earth is a government program.

I could go on. I could talk about how Big Government tends to stifle the innovation that leads to economic growth or ask why Democrats think that a group of bureaucrats in Washington are the best decision makers for American families. But I want to touch on one other point before I close, and that is that Democrats believe in government dependence as the goal. They might dispute that characterization, but you only have to look at the tax-and-spending package that they are putting together to know that is their vision.

They envision a future where Americans rely on the government for everything from childcare, to education, to healthcare, and on and on. That is a vision with which Republicans fundamentally disagree. Our vision is not a future of government dependence because government doesn't bring prosperity. Government doesn't bring the American dream. At best, government is going to help you survive. It is not going to help you thrive.

Yes, government can be an important backstop in difficult situations or national emergencies, like the COVID crisis, but the goal should always be to get people to a place where they don't have to rely on government. Permanent government dependence robs people of the purpose and pride that comes with work and personal achievement, and, as I said, it denies them the opportunity for prosperity. No one ever became prosperous on government benefits.

If you asked most Americans what the American dream means to them, I am pretty sure you would hear things like a "good job," a "rewarding career," the "chance to pursue my ambitions," or the "chance to improve my circumstances and make life better for my children." That is what Americans envision, not a future of government dependence and government subsidies.

People are looking to achieve the kind of prosperity where they don't need government involvement in every aspect of their lives and can choose their paths for themselves instead of having to follow the rules and regulations that come with government benefits.

That is a vision that Republicans share, and it is what we are committed to fighting for on behalf of the American people. That is another reason we are committed to maintaining limited government, because the bigger government grows, the more that vision of opportunity and prosperity shrinks.

And so Speaker PELOSI is partially right. She is wrong to dismiss the bill's pricetag, because it is profoundly—profoundly—irresponsible to mortgage our children's and grandchildren's futures with a massive government spending increase, but she is right in that it is about values.

Now, Republicans aren't opposing Democrats' tax-and-spending spree simply because it spends a lot of money, but because it advances a vision of government with which we profoundly disagree. We don't believe that the American dream is government dependence; we don't believe in an ever-expanding role for the Federal Government; and we don't believe that bureaucrats in Washington are a good substitute for the judgment of the American people.

That is why every Republican in the Senate will be voting against the Democrats' reckless spending legislation, not just because it spends too much money, but because it fundamentally undermines the American tradition of liberty and limited government. It is about values, and it is about visions, and Republicans do not share the Democrats' vision of a future of Big Government and Big Brother.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to conclude my remarks before the scheduled rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RUSSIA

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to continue the discussion that we have been having about the harms of Nord Stream 2.

I will discuss in this speech one of the administration's legal responsibilities, in particular to impose sanctions in a way that they are now defying those legal responsibilities.

I do want to note that every day brings new evidence of the incoherence of President Biden's sellout and surrender to Vladimir Putin. Since we last discussed this, elections have occurred in Germany and the government of Angela Merkel, on whose behalf the Biden administration claims to be acting, will now be replaced. So the entire surrender to Russia by Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS was for nothing. I will discuss that further throughout the day and throughout the week.

We have heard repeatedly from my Democratic colleagues that my actions to block some of President Biden's nominees are unprecedented. That accusation doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Senators routinely use their preroga-

tives, and, indeed, Democrats regularly engaged in massive obstruction over months and years of President Trump's nominations. What isn't unprecedented, however, is Joe Biden's open defiance and literal lawlessness in not imposing the sanctions mandated by multiple laws passed overwhelmingly by Congress.

Right now, I would like to talk about one of the laws that the President is violating: CAATSA—the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. Before getting into the details of Nord Stream 2, I would like to note a couple of things about CAATSA.

First, CAATSA was explicitly designed for the purpose of taking away the President's discretion whether or not to impose sanctions on Russia in cases where Congress had deemed it necessary to mandate them. And secondly, on that basis, CAATSA passed Congress with nearly unanimous support: 419 to 3 in the House, and 98 to 2 in the Senate.

As for the purpose of CAATSA, I would like to quote some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle who were both clear and celebratory about the bill.

Senator MURPHY, who has been particularly loquacious in opposition to these holes, said about CAATSA: "It is not often that Congress takes away, from the president, discretionary powers on foreign policy."

Worth remembering.

Senator SCHUMER, who has also had more than a little bit to say on these holes, said that CAATSA was necessary because of what he described as the President's "seeming inability to deal with the many transgressions of Russia."

Gosh, Senator SCHUMER was right. We now have a President unwilling and unable to deal with, as he put it, the "many transgressions of Russia."

What about Senator MENENDEZ?

Senator MENENDEZ has stood on this floor, including at 4:00 and 5:00 and 6:00 in the morning, railing about these blocks.

Well, what did he say about CAATSA?

He said that CAATSA sent "the most powerful message in the world, that the United States—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—stand together."

Those were really fine sentiments. I wish they held true when there was a Democratic President as much as Senator MENENDEZ believed them when there was a Republican President.

And how about Senator DURBIN?

Senator DURBIN is never lacking an opinion on any topic. Here is what he said: "We had to tell them enough is enough, and when it came to the sanctions and trusting the president, we basically said we want to make sure the president will not lift these sanctions."

Well, do you know what? Senator MURPHY was right. Senator SCHUMER was right. Senator MENENDEZ was right. Senator DURBIN was right. That

is why Congress came together to pass CAATSA, tough legislation to prevent a President from doing what Joe Biden is doing right now: surrendering to Putin, surrendering to Russia, ignoring U.S. law, and giving Putin a multibillion-dollar gift.

And, when my Democratic colleagues didn't believe the Trump administration was implementing the full breadth of mandatory sanctions under CAATSA, they made the purpose of CAATSA even clearer.

On January 30, 2018, Senator CARDIN led a letter about CAATSA to then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, cosigned by 21 other Democrats—almost half of the caucus. They said that the Trump administration's failure to impose mandatory sanctions "do not fully reflect the clear congressional intent described in the legislation . . . We expect the administration to provide a full explanation as to why it has not imposed mandatory sanctions" under several provisions of CAATSA.

Then, on May 18, 2018, Senator MENENDEZ led a letter about CAATSA to several inspectors general, cosigned by two other Democrats. They said that "[s]everal mandatory provisions of the law have not been implemented . . . despite strong evidence that actions taken by or on behalf of the Russian government are in violation of the CAATSA sanctions law."

In fact, I would like to read more of that letter because it is so abundantly clear about the purpose of CAATSA:

In light of the apparent violations and the lack of corresponding sanctions actions, we are concerned about whether the sanctions implementation process within the administration is fulfilling CAATSA's mandate and intent. In general, with respect to mandatory measures, the President is required to make determinations in the event he has established that sanctions behavior has taken place, and then either impose sanctions or exercise a waiver.

So a binary choice: One or the other. That is what of a President is required.

And do you know what? Senator CARDIN and Senator MENENDEZ, well, they might have meant it, but they didn't say it: Only Republican Presidents are required to do this.

They didn't write that in their letters because, of course, CAATSA doesn't say that. What they said is a President is required to make that choice. The law requires the President to make that choice.

Senator CARDIN was right. Senator MENENDEZ was right. And Joe Biden is telling them: Go jump in a lake.

He is telling the U.S. Congress: Go jump in a lake.

He is telling the American people: Go jump in a lake.

He is cutting a deal with Putin, and don't bring no stinkin' laws to get in his way.

That brings to us Nord Stream 2. One of the provisions that my Democratic colleagues cited in both of those letters was section 228: "Sanctions with respect to certain transactions with foreign sanctions evaders and serious